

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

5 1. A system for performing a business process,  
comprising:

a first version of a business application that is  
identified using a first version identifier and executed by  
a first client to perform a particular business process;  
and

10 a second version of the business application that is  
identified using a second version identifier and executed  
by a second client to perform the business process, wherein  
the second client is coupled to the first client using a  
communication link and the second version of the business  
application is operable to determine a selected one of the  
15 first version of the business application and the second  
version of the business application to initiate the  
business process based upon the first version identifier  
and the second version identifier.

20 2. The system of Claim 1, wherein:

the second version of the business application  
comprises a version identification module operable to  
generate a version identification request for communication  
to the first client, wherein the version identification  
request is associated with the particular business process  
25 and generated according to a version identification  
protocol supported by the first version of the business  
application and the second version of the business  
application; and

30 the first version of the business application  
comprises a version identification module operable to  
initiate communicating the first version identifier to the  
second version of the business application in response to  
the version identification request.

5 3. The system of Claim 1, wherein the second version of the business application is operable to control the business process if the first version of the business application is not higher than the second version of the business application.

4. The system of Claim 3, wherein the second version of the business application further comprises a business process module operable to:

10 generate a first business message associated with the business process for communication to the first client, the first business message generated according to the first version of the business application; and  
15 initiate retrieving from the first client a second business message generated according to the first version of the business application.

20 5. The system of Claim 3, wherein the first version of the business application further comprises a status message module operable to generate a status message for communication to the second client to indicate the presence of a business message associated with the business process, the status message generated according to a status message protocol supported by the first version of the business  
25 application and the second version of the business application.

30 6. The system of Claim 1, wherein the first version of the business application is operable to control the business process if the first version of the business application is higher than the second version of the business application.

7. The system of Claim 6, wherein the first version of the business application further comprises a business process module operable to:

initiate retrieving from the second client a first business message associated with the business process, the first business message generated according to the second version of the business application; and

generate a second business message associated with the business process for communication to the second client, the second business message generated according to the second version of the business application.

8. The system of Claim 6, wherein the second version of the business application further comprises a status message module operable to generate a status message for communication to the first client to indicate the presence of a business message associated with the business process, the status message generated according to a status message protocol supported by the second version of the business application and the first version of the business application.

9. A method for performing a business process, comprising:

determining a first version identifier associated with a first version of a business application used by a first client to perform a business process;

determining a second version identifier associated with a second version of the business application used by a second client to perform the business process; and

determining a selected one of the first version of the business application and the second version of the business application to initiate the business process based upon the first version identifier and the second version identifier.

10. The method of Claim 9, further comprising:

generating a version identification request for communication to the first client; and

receiving the first version identifier in response to the version identification request.

11. The method of Claim 10, wherein the step of generating comprises generating the version identification request according to a version identification protocol that is supported by the first version of the business application and the second version of the business application.

12. The method of Claim 9, further comprising controlling the business process by the second version of the business application if the first version of the business application is not higher than the second version of the business application.

13. The method of Claim 12, further comprising:

generating a first business message associated with the business process for communication to the first client, the first business message generated according to the first version of the business application; and

retrieving a second business message generated by the first client according to the first version of the business application.

14. The method of Claim 12, further comprising:

receiving a status message generated by the first client according to a status message protocol that is supported by the first version of the business application and the second version of the business application, the status message indicating the presence of a business message associated with the business process; and

retrieving the business message from the first client in response to the status message.

15. The method of Claim 9, further comprising controlling the business process by the first version of the business application if the first version of the business application is higher than the second version of the business application.

16. The method of Claim 15, further comprising:

retrieving from the second client a first business message associated with the business process, the first business message generated according to the second version of the business application; and

communicating to the second client a second business message generated according to the second version of the business application.

17. The method of Claim 15, further comprising:

receiving a status message generated by the second client according to a status message protocol supported by the first version of the business application and the second version of the business application, the status message indicating the presence of a business message associated with the business process; and

retrieving the business message from the second client in response to the status message.

18. The method of Claim 9, further comprising:

performing the business process according to the first version of the business application if the first version of the business application is not higher than the second version of the business application; and

performing the business process according to the second version of the business application if the first version of the business application is higher than the second version of the business application.

19. A business application for performing a business process, the application encoded on a computer-readable medium and operable to execute the following steps:

5 determining a first version identifier associated with a first version of the business application used by a first client to perform a business process;

determining a second version identifier associated with a second version of the business application used by a second client to perform the business process; and

10 determining a selected one of the first client and the second client to initiate the business process based upon the first version identifier and the second version identifier.

15 20. The business application of Claim 19, further comprising:

generating a version identification request for communication to the first client; and

20 receiving the first version identifier in response to the version identification request.

21. The business application of Claim 20, wherein the step of generating comprises generating the version identification request according to a version identification protocol that is supported by the first version of the business application and the second version of the business application.

22. The business application of Claim 19, further comprising controlling the business process by the second version of the business application if the first version of the business application is not higher than the second version of the business application.

23. The business application of Claim 22, further comprising:

generating a first business message associated with the business process for communication to the first client, the first business message generated according to the first version of the business application; and

retrieving a second business message generated by the first client according to the first version of the business application.

24. The business application of Claim 22, further comprising:

receiving a status message generated by the first client according to a status message protocol that is supported by the first version of the business application and the second version of the business application, the status message indicating the presence of a business message associated with the business process; and

retrieving the business message from the first client in response to the status message.

25. The business application of Claim 19 further comprising controlling the business process by the first version of the business application if the first version of the business application is higher than the second version of the business application.



26. The business application of Claim 25, further comprising:

retrieving from the second client a first business message associated with the business process, the first business message generated according to the second version of the business application; and

communicating to the second client a second business message generated according to the second version of the business application.

27. The business application of Claim 25, further comprising:

receiving a status message generated by the second client according to a status message protocol supported by the first version of the business application and the second version of the business application, the status message indicating the presence of a business message associated with the business process; and

retrieving the business message from the second client in response to the status message.

28. The business application of Claim 19, further comprising:

performing the business process according to the first version of the business application if the first version of the business application is not higher than the second version of the business application; and

performing the business process according to the second version of the business application if the first version of the business application is higher than the second version of the business application.

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